

# THE HISTORY

OF THE

Eighth United Presbyterian Church,

OF

PITTSBURGH, PENN'A.,

FROM YESTERDAY UNTIL TO-DAY.

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## A SERMON

PREACHED ON SABBATH, JUNE 25TH, 1876.

BY

REV. JOHN S. SANDS, PASTOR.

1644

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PUBLISHED BY THE CONGREGATION.

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PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED BY BAKEWELL & MARTENS, No. 71 GRANT STREET.

1876.

ORGANIZED,  
June 21, 1868.

INCORPORATED,  
Dec. 12, 1868

## OFFICERS.

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### PASTOR.

REV. JOHN S. SANDS.

### ELDERS.

E. S. MORROW,

ROBERT SANDS,

DAVID DINES,

N. M. POINDEXTER.

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### SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

JOHN S. LAMBIE.

Church Building, located on Corner of Van Braam and Locust Streets.

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"We are but of yesterday."—Job 8: 9.

WE have been directed by those in authority in the church to write the history of our congregation. When written, it in common with others of its kind is to be put away and carefully preserved, so that generations yet to come may profit by our experiences, guard against our mistakes, and learn to set their hope in God. Being fully and heartily in sympathy with this movement, we will try to tell, as well as we are able, the story of our life. It will be perchance a commonplace story, containing nothing but "the short and simple annals of the poor"; made up of what may seem to many to be trifling little details, such as would be found in the history of a little child. Be it so—we confess our youth. We do not, for we cannot, boast of a history that reaches away back into the shadowy past. "We are but of yesterday." We do not sit down, like some gray-headed historian, fresh from a study of musty old records, to tell of times that are long ago gone and deeds that were long ago done; but rather like some little one who has been questioned by the kind friend upon whose knee it sits, we modestly point to the lowly cradle in which we were rocked, not yet put out of sight, and tell our little experiences, interesting and wonderful to us, if not to others.



Let us begin, then, at the beginning. On the 26th of June, 1866, just ten years ago to-morrow, the United Presbyterian Presbytery of Monongahela appointed a committee, consisting of Revs. Dr. Robert Gracey, S. B. Reed and J. S. Hawk, to visit Oakland and other points in the vicinity of Pittsburgh, and if in their judgment thought advisable, to establish a missionary station and make arrangements for preaching. At the next regular meeting of Presbytery held on Sept. 18th, 1866, the committee made a partial report, suggesting what was then known as the Eighth Ward, Pittsburgh, as a needy field for missionary work. Messrs. Graham Scott and W. M. Gormly were then added to the committee, and the instructions given at the former meeting were repeated. Some time in January, 1867, the hall of the Relief engine house, on Fifth avenue, between Miltenberger and Van Braam streets, was secured as a place for preaching, and Rev. Samuel Jamison, whose labors had lately been abundantly blessed at Buena Vista, Penn'a., was appointed, and entered upon the work as missionary. For reasons not stated, at a meeting of the Presbytery held on May 7th, 1867, after three or four months' labor, Mr. Jamison declined to act any longer. Arrangements were then made to have preaching regularly each Sabbath night, by members of the Presbytery. At the same time Messrs. Hugh McMaster, Wm. Fleming and James Robb were added to the committee in charge of the Mission, and they were instructed to secure a superintendent and teachers for the Sabbath school. A member of the committee writing to a friend at that time with special reference to the Mission, informed him that the "audiences numbered from twenty to thirty, that about thirty scholars were in regular attendance upon the Sabbath school, and that he understood that the teachers were energetic and faithful." Still, notwithstanding their energy and faithfulness, the school did not prosper, and in September, 1867, it was sick and nigh unto death. On the 15th of that month some six or seven warm-hearted ones met in a private house and reorganized the school. Mr. Wm. H. Glenn, who had all along taken an active interest in the enterprise, was elected superintendent. On the following Sabbath the school numbered thirteen scholars. In the meantime preaching was kept up on Sabbath evening by the members of Presbytery.

The committee having been directed by Presbytery, which

met on June 25th, 1867, to use its endeavors to secure a permanent missionary for the station, found one, "a youth to fortune and to fame unknown," who, after repeated solicitations on their part, agreed to serve them for a little while, and was formally appointed as missionary on Oct. 18th, 1867. Perhaps some of you remember him as he slipped in and sat down in the old engine house hall on Sabbath afternoon, Oct. 26th, 1867, as near to the door as he could get. He was a boyish looking body, with a smooth face, and dressed in a boyish sort of a way. He was only a licentiate, with his course of study at the Theological Seminary lacking one year of completion,—was somewhat modest and backward, had a poor opinion of his own abilities, and a heart that trembled within him when he thought of the unknown, untried work that had been assigned to him. Saving that he was young and would grow, he was rather a discouraging looking specimen of pulpit furniture. But the preacher was in keeping with the place and its occupants.

What a queer place it was! Getting into it was something like going up stairs to bed in the dark. Entering from the street on a level with the pavement, you passed through a long, narrow, dark hallway, until your foot kicked against the lowest step of a flight of steep, narrow, crooked stairs, up which you carefully groped your way, and at the head of which, a little to the right, you found a large double door opening into what was known as the hall. It was a room forty-nine feet long and twenty-one feet wide, with one big window divided into three, occupying nearly the whole front end. It was a very dingy place. The walls were covered with dark, dirty oak paneled paper, and the ceiling was covered with old-time paper of various colors, arranged in circles and other quaint geometrical figures. The floors were bare. The desk was a square box. The room was seated with about twenty-five unpainted, uncomfortable pine benches. Ventilation there was none. True, there was a trap-door in the ceiling, but that simply opened into unknown dark regions lying between the ceiling and the roof. A stable in the rear part of the building down stairs, in which the horses belonging to the fire company were kept, added nothing to the comforts of the situation.

The school looked just as queer as the place in which it was gathered that day, as the newly appointed missionary sat by the



door. There were about sixty scholars present, and about ten or twelve officers and teachers, not one of whom was known to him and not one of whom knew who he was or why he had come. However, it did not take long to get acquainted, and on Sabbath evening, Nov. 17th, he preached to the little audience in the engine house for the first time, using as his text Hosca 12:6, "Turn thou to thy God," and with that entered fully on his work. Some time was spent in getting acquainted with the field, and especially in securing the confidence and friendship of the little people of the neighborhood. Many a sled ride he took with them,—many a pleasant little chat he had with them on their play grounds and on the corners of the streets. Through them he found entrance to a number of houses, out of one of which he was chased by an irate Roman Catholic with a broomstick in her hands. The teachers in the school and the friends of the Mission worked heartily, too, in various ways, and soon we had the pleasure of seeing the hall filled to its utmost capacity. Children were seated on the window sills and on the platform, and some were obliged to stand. Teachers were seen, for want of room, seated on the floor, and still new scholars flocked in until there was no room to receive them, and we were compelled to turn many away and send them to other schools. Missionary work among the children for a time necessarily ceased. A small room back of the main hall was secured and fitted up as an infant class room, and it too was soon filled. With 196 scholars enrolled, giving an average attendance of 130, distributed in seventeen classes, we felt encouraged.

The audiences at Sabbath evening services gradually increased in numbers, and better still, towards the close of the year we heard "the sound of a going in the tops of the trees." The Spirit was present, working through our feeble instrumentalities, and this and that soul were heard asking the question of all questions, "What must I do to be saved?" God was placing the broad seal of his approval on our work. We thanked God, and took courage.

On the 29th of January, 1868, our first Wednesday evening prayer meeting was held. There were eight persons present. We met in the little room back of the main hall in the engine house. A solitary tallow candle, fastened in an old-fashioned tin holder, which hung on a nail in the wall, did its very best to light up the stairway leading to our place of prayer. We kindled the fire after



we assembled that evening. The chimney did not draw well, and the room was filled with smoke. The missionary read a Scripture lesson, made a short address, offered three or four short prayers, in fact did all the work, even to the leading in singing, in doing which he had but one tune at his command. It was a day of small things, but was not despised by those who were present. As we left the humble place, carrying our candle with us, we felt that it was good to be there. Each Wednesday evening found the numbers increasing, and the interest deepening, until our little room was so full that we were obliged to abandon it for the larger one. From that day to this, not more, and it may be less than six Wednesday evenings have gone by without our social prayer meeting.

On the 21st of April, 1868, the Presbytery of Monongahela met in the Relief engine house, and with the laying on of hands ordained as an evangelist him who to-day ministers to you. The hall was well filled. Rev. T. H. Hanna preached the sermon, taking as his text the last clause of the eighteenth verse of the first chapter of Colossians, "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Rev. John G. Brown, D. D., presided and proposed the constitutional questions. Rev. Robert Gracey, D. D., since then gone to his reward, addressed the trembling evangelist, and Rev. W. J. Reid, D. D., addressed the people. On the following Monday, the 27th of April, 1868, the members of the Mission held a meeting, at which for various reasons the missionary was not present. They were unacquainted with the rules of church government, and knew nothing about ecclesiastical forms, but that did not embarrass them in the least. How they conducted that meeting history does not say, but before they adjourned they succeeded in making out a unanimous call for the services of the missionary who was already laboring among them. There had as yet been no congregation organized, there had been no petition to Presbytery for the moderation of a call, there were no forms followed, but there was the call, well worded and to the point, signed by thirty persons and presented to "the brother," not by Presbytery, but by a committee appointed by the meeting!

This call was not disposed of as calls usually are, because it could not be, but it was looked upon as one way of expressing a desire for organization. Accordingly on the 21st of June, 1868, eight years ago, after the usual preliminary meetings, the Eighth United Presbyte-



rian Congregation of Pittsburgh was fully organized with thirty-five members, nineteen of whom were received by certificate, and sixteen upon profession of faith. Messrs. Ralph Reed and E. S. Morrow were on that evening ordained and installed as ruling elders. Of the thirty-five original members of this congregation, eighteen are still numbered with us, eleven have moved out of our bounds, four have died, and two are worshipping in another congregation of this city. Of the nineteen who were received by certificate, two came from the First Church, Pittsburgh, ten came from the Second Church, six came from the Third Church, and one came from a church in Ireland. The first board of trustees consisted of Messrs. W. H. Glenn, W. H. Sims, Robert Sands, Jno. H. Harper and E. S. Morrow.

This little band of disciples gathered around the table of the Lord for the first time on Sabbath, July 12th, 1868. Rev. S. B. Reed and the session of the Fifth Church, by whom, in accordance with the instructions of Presbytery, the organization had been effected, sat down at the table with them. That was an high day. The text we used was, "To you who believe, he is precious."

It was then the middle of summer, the hall was like a little oven, hot and unventilated. Six dozen huge palm-leaf fans were provided—now and then a teacher was seen with his coat off in the Sabbath school, but all efforts to keep cool were in vain. The hall had been cleaned, the seats had been painted, the desk had been remodelled, carpet had been put on and about the platform, and a strip of matting had been laid along the aisle; but we were obliged to suspend operations until the fall. Then followed a winter of hard work, a winter filled with meetings for prayer, held in the engine house, held in the houses of members, and held in the houses of others whose salvation we sought. A Boys' Prayer Meeting was organized in connection with the Sabbath school, conducted by the boys themselves, the attendance at which ranged from fifty to seventy. A Girls' Prayer Meeting was organized, which was equally successful in point of numbers. The influence of these two meetings is felt among us yet. A Ladies' Aid Society was organized, the neighborhood was districted, and two by two they went from house to house distributing tracts, visiting the sick, relieving the poor, and inviting the careless to their humble place of worship. Being sadly in need of money to carry on our work, we decided to hold a



“Fair,” on what seemed to us a very extensive scale. We all labored hard and did our best to make it a success, and netted just thirty-five cents. We accepted the result in a philosophic and submissive way. The first “social gathering” of the congregation was held during the holidays that winter at the residence of one of the elders. It was a happy family gathering, and bound together yet more firmly those who were already bound together in Christian bonds.

So we labored; all were united, active and happy. But one day, a beautiful day in May, 1869, a storm came. Some of us remember it well. One of our number, a woman who was among the most faithful, devoted and energetic in our little band, was suddenly killed by lightning. How startled we were! Scarcely had we recovered from the shock and wiped the tears away, when we were called to stand by the death-bed of one of our ruling elders. Mr. Ralph Reed, after a few days’ illness, filled to the full with bodily agonies, and yet triumphant and joyful in soul, on the 21st of July went away to the better world and left us weeping in this. His last message to us was, “Tell the congregation that I die in peace, and to meet me in glory.” These successive providences seemed strange and grievous, but God gave us needed grace. By the death of Elder Reed the session of the Eighth Church was disorganized, and by consent of Presbytery the remaining members invited Mr. Hugh McMaster, an elder in the First Church, to serve with them until a new election for elders should be held. At the close of our first year’s history as a congregation we had a membership of fifty-nine.

In the meantime new difficulties presented themselves. Our hall was not roomy enough, and yet it was the only one to be found in this section of the city. Besides that, the engine company from whom we had leased it wanted it, and had made several efforts to get us out of it. Gladly would we have gone out, but we had no place to go to. Our prayers were burdened with the plea that God would show us what to do, and open up the way for us. A special prayer was offered, asking Him whom we served to indicate in some way his will in reference to the matter of building. The very next day, a friend we did not know we had, unsought for and unsolicited by us, offered to start a movement towards securing a church building for the Mission by a subscription of \$1,000. This

was looked upon as an answer to that prayer, and an earnest that God would bless us in our efforts. A meeting of the congregation was held in a private house, and measures were taken to secure a lot. The one we now occupy, on the corner of Van Braam and Locust streets, 80 feet front by 102 feet deep, was selected, for which, by the aid of kind friends, we paid \$4,500 cash. After that we had busy times; the trustees met regularly once a week in the court house, plans for a building were prepared, and on the 24th of December, 1869, the first stone in the foundation of this building was put into its place. Then came the wearying, worrying work of raising the money which was needed. There was nothing at all in the treasury the day the masons commenced. The walls began to rise, we gave what we were able, and with faith in God, whose are the silver and the gold, we appealed to our friends for help. Though many refused, as a rule those whom we asked gave cheerfully, while many gave unasked. Their names are all faithfully recorded on the books of the church. It seemed to us an awful undertaking, but by no means an impossible one. We knew we would meet with difficulties, but we were confident of success. Many shook their heads as they passed by our unfinished church, and as was said to the workmen who were building up the broken down walls of Jerusalem, "What do these feeble Jews?" so it was said to us. Slowly but steadily, on through the summer and fall of 1870, the work went forward; but before the building could be made ready we found ourselves homeless—the doors of the engine house were closed against us.

For more than a year we had withstood all the efforts of certain members of the fire company, then connected with the Volunteer Fire Department, to put us out. In untold ways they had annoyed us. At times we entered for worship only to find the benches piled up in a kind of tangled knot in the middle of the floor; at other times beer-kegs would occupy the pulpit platform, and other evidences of a Saturday night's carousal would be seen in the room. Now and then at evening services the gas would be turned off from the cellar, obliging us on more than one occasion to content ourselves with the light of two little lamps that stood on the minister's desk. At other times the meter would be so manipulated that the gas jets would burn very high for a few minutes, then almost go out, then suddenly flare up with a whistling sort of



noise, and then suddenly burn very low again. Although forbidden to use instrumental music, we often sat and sang our songs of praise, accompanied by a violin in the hands of some one down stairs, who played and danced to the sober tune we sang. At another time pebble stones and dirt were thrown through the trap-door in the ceiling at the preacher. At another time the door of the engine house was nailed up to prevent our admission to the hall, but an axe in the hands of a member soon opened it for the congregation waiting on the side walk. These are but specimens of the many petty little persecutions that fell to our lot. We grew accustomed to them, and took them as matters of course. They did us good rather than harm, for such opposition only made us, by God's grace, the stronger; but the surroundings were such that many people who would otherwise have worshipped with us were afraid to enter the building. However, we clung to each other through it all, and carried our burdens to our Father's throne, and whispered our troubles in our Father's ear. At the same time we looked longingly forward to the time when we would be able to worship under our own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest or make us afraid.

On the 1st of November, 1870, all we owned about the old engine house, save its precious memories, was, without warning, carried out and piled on the pavement. There were stoves and stove-pipe, pulpit, book-case, chairs, table and seats, in wonderful confusion. A large wagon was procured, the stuff put into it, and two or three members distributed it over the neighborhood, a little here and a little there, for safe-keeping. Messages were sent to all the members of the congregation, notifying them of what had occurred, and a prayer meeting was held the next evening in a private house. We were almost all sick at heart, and showed signs of despondency, but cheery words came from the session of a sister congregation, inviting us to worship with them until our building could be made ready. Cheering words came, too, from one of our own number. While all were more or less perplexed by the strange providence, he rose and said: "When the eagle wishes to teach her young ones to fly, she stirs up their nest, spoils it and throws them out; but she don't let them fall to the ground and get hurt. She flies under them and bears them up on her wings. So God, it may be, wishes to teach us to fly—wishes to

teach us to help ourselves. He has put thorns into our nest, spoiled it and thrown us out, but he won't let us get hurt. He will bear us up as on eagles' wings." It was a short speech, but it was full of comfort, felt by all. The cloud was broken, the light came through, and though for some seven weeks homeless, we were happy and hopeful. With all its faults, we loved that old engine house. There are those here to-day who cannot pass it without a loving look. It was the birth-place of our organization, and the cradle in which we were rocked in our infancy. It was our tabernacle while in the wilderness, our Bethel, our house of God, consecrated in the hearts and memories of those who Sabbath after Sabbath gathered there. Yes, it was home—our home; and you know, be it ever so humble, there is no place like home. We felt homeless when we knew we were to be permitted to meet there no more—homeless, yet hopeful and happy. For a few weeks after that, our Sabbath school met in the Forbes public school building.

Work on the new church building was of necessity hurried forward, and on Sabbath, December 18th, 1870, we worshipped in the lecture room of it for the first time. The shavings were still scattered about the door, the painting was not yet finished, but what mattered it. The first sermon was preached in the morning by the missionary. It was founded on Deuteronomy 12 : 9, "Ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you." We talked over the experiences of the past, the joys of the present, and the hopes and duties of the future. In the afternoon, Rev. T. H. Hanna preached from Psalm 77 : 13, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary." In the evening, Rev. W. J. Reid, D. D., preached from Matthew 16 : 18, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It was a joyous day; friends crowded in to rejoice with us, and we scarcely knew whether we were in the body or out of the body. We entered our new building with an active membership of 70, and with about 200 scholars enrolled in our Sabbath school. The session had been reorganized on the 18th of the preceding April, by the ordination and installation of two additional elders, Messrs. David Dines and James H. McCune.

We were deeply in debt, and although our building presented an unsightly appearance, concluded to leave the front and upper part of



it unfinished until we were stronger and better able to complete it. For some two years we struggled along carrying a heavy mortgage, on which we were barely able to pay the interest, when a friendly helping hand was extended to us by the pastor and session of the First U. P. Church of this city, and by the Board of Church Extension who had already befriended us. Encouraged by the aid granted and secured through them, we were enabled to pay off part of our debt, finish our audience room, and put the building in its present condition. The whole cost of the building was about \$26,000. The audience room was formally opened on January 18, 1874. Rev. D. R. Kerr, D. D., preached in the morning. His text was Psalm 145: 10, 11, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." His subject was, "The Glory of Christ's Kingdom." In the afternoon Rev. W. J. Reid, D. D., preached. His text was Psalm 48: 12, 13, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following." His subject was, "The Model Congregation." In the evening Rev. E. T. Jeffers, D. D., preached a discourse founded on the 67th Psalm. His subject was, "The Conversion of the World." That was another day of joy and of heartfelt gratitude. Once more our friends crowded in to rejoice with us, and filled our audience room to its utmost capacity. No wonder we were glad. Our new brick building, sixty-two feet by eighty-five, plainly but substantially constructed, with its neat and cheerful Sabbath school, prayer meeting and audience rooms, was to all practical purposes finished. We had lived to see the day, and to give God the glory.

Lest we should be exalted above measure, the acting pastor was on the next day after the opening laid upon a bed of sickness. During the eight months of his absence, the members of the congregation labored and prayed as earnestly and unitedly as ever they had done while he was at the wheel, giving proof to those who were interested in them that the work already done had not been done in vain. By and by it pleased God to bring minister and people together again. It was a joyful reunion, and from that time to this the work has gone steadily forward, until to-day we complete the eighth year of our history as an organization.

Let us gather up the bare statistics. During these past eight years, 257 persons have been admitted to membership in this congregation, 127 by certificate from other congregations, and 130 upon profession of faith; of this number, 172 remain enrolled as members. The majority of the others have moved out of our bounds; some few have been stricken from the roll as unworthy, and nine have gone to another, and we trust a better world. The session as at present constituted consists of Messrs. E. S. Morrow, David Dines, Robert Sands and N. M. Poindexter, the last two named having been ordained and installed as ruling elders on the evening of July 7th, 1875. The present board of trustees consists of Messrs. Matthew Aber, John H. Harper, Wm. J. Brown, Jno. S. Lambie and Jacob Ruch.

The congregation has never really had a pastor, he who has been acting in that capacity never having been installed. There being no organization here at the time of my ordination, I simply occupy the position of an evangelist among you. For my own part I prefer to let the relation stand as it is, at least for the present. Permit me to say further, during these eight years, including eight months of sickness, I have preached 806 sermons, 500 of which have been preached to this congregation. During the same period I have baptized 17 adults and 78 infants, and conducted 471 meetings for prayer. Altogether we have had on an average over 100 prayer meetings each year, the attendance upon which, although it might have been better, has almost always been good. The sacrament of the Lord's supper has been observed by us on 32 occasions, four times each year. 530 sermons have been preached in this building. Since we entered it in December, 1870, it has been opened every Sabbath for service, with the exception of seventeen.

As a congregation we have always taken a deep interest in the young. Our Sabbath school rooms are filled every Sabbath. As a rule, our teachers have been and are earnest, devoted, faithful and progressive, and our scholars regular in their attendance, attached to their teachers, and ready to learn. We have enrolled at present about 425 scholars and 25 officers and teachers, with Mr. Jno. S. Lambie as superintendent. With very few exceptions the children of the congregation of suitable age are found in the classes of our school. The majority of our scholars, however, are the children of unbelieving parents. Many of them come from wretched homes,



some of them from saloons, and the influences surrounding them from Monday to Saturday are soul-hardening and destroying, and counteract in a great degree the good we try to do. Still the Lord has blessed us abundantly in our labors in their behalf, and though we may not be able to point to very many gathered into the church through the instrumentality of the Sabbath school, we can point to some, and are sure that our labor has not been in vain in the Lord. Seed has been sown that will some day spring up to the glory of Him who alone knoweth how it will grow.

Our financial condition is every year improving. During the earlier years of our history we received aid from the Board of Home Missions and from the Board of Church Extension, but we are now doing our best to stand alone. We are still in debt, upon about \$4,000 of which we are paying interest. We look forward anxiously, yet hopefully and confidently, to the time when we will be free and owe no man anything. We have no pew rents, the seats are free to all who choose to worship with us. Some two years and a half ago we adopted what is known as the Weekly Envelope System, by which each member is expected to contribute weekly to the funds of the church according as the Lord has prospered him. The system works well, and the liberality of the people seems to be increasing each year. There is, however, room for improvement in this grace.

Spiritually we are, so far as I am able to judge by outward evidences, in fair condition. Our growth in grace has been much like our growth in other directions, very slow, but very steady. We have had no periods of great religious excitement; we have had no wonderful awakenings, and yet to-day, taking us as a whole, we are, I believe, better Christians than we used to be. Some of us have grown faster than others, and are outstripping them in the race; but none of us are what we ought to be. God helping us, we will all press on to that which is before us.

We are a peaceful congregation; we have always been peaceful. Of course there have now and then been little misunderstandings and estrangements between this one and that one. The sharp corners in the character of one have accidentally come in contact with the sharp corners in the character of another, and little sparks have been known to fly, but they were generally speedily extinguished. We have had no congregational quarrels—we have lived

and worked together in harmony—we are members one of another. I suppose we could fight if we wanted to, and it is not because we are better than others that we do not do so. We recognize the power and goodness of God in it all. By carefully cultivating the spirit of Christian love and sociability, and carefully guarding against giving unnecessary offence, we have, by the blessing of God upon our efforts, lived through the past as a happy family in our Father's house, and so, if it please God, we wish to live together in the future. We know that offences must needs come, but we fear the woe pronounced by the Master on him by whom they come.

The majority of our members are young people. We have some grey-headed ones, some fathers and mothers in Israel among us, but they are comparatively few. We are glad to have them with us; we will care for them as tenderly as we know how, and help them as they travel down the other side of the hill into the valley. In the main, as individuals as well as a congregation, "we are but of yesterday," and are just entering, or have not long ago entered upon manhood and womanhood.

Our field has been a very hard one to work, but we believe we have been amply repaid for all our toil and trouble. We know not what sort of experiences await us in the future; we are content to leave the future in the hands of Him who doeth all things well, being well assured that come joy or come sorrow, come weal or come woe, come success or come failure, if faithful unto death we shall have our crown of life.

Such, then, is the story of our life as we will record it for generations that are yet to come. Perhaps some one will read it, perhaps not. Devoid of interest it may be to others, yet to us it is eventful—a story of struggles and triumphs, a story of griefs and joys, a story of weeping and laughing, a story laden with precious memories, one that we needed not to write for ourselves, for it has been written page by page upon our hearts. We have written down what seem to us to be but the bare outlines. Who shall record the unseen influences that have gone out from our little organization? Who shall gather up the unwritten experiences of each soul, its hopes, its fears, its encouragements, its discouragements, its joys, its griefs, its toils, its struggles, its successes, its failures and sins during these eight years of its history? God hath gathered them up and put them on record on high, far beyond the reach of any de-



stroying human hand. They will be read when we all gather in the sanctuary above. Then the stories and memories of the past, both good and bad, shall be told, and every hidden thing shall be brought to light.

There are scores of little incidents connected with our mission work that I could tell you, that I know you would be pleased to hear. Some of them would thrill you with gratitude, some of them would bring tears to your eyes, and some of them would fill your mouths with laughter. But tempted though I am to record some of them, and pleasant and profitable though it might be, I pass them by. Let us rather note briefly two or three practical lessons suggested by this review.

*First.* Let me say to you what I said in the first sermon that was preached in this house: “*Have faith in God.* The faith that goes with our praying and working is not what it ought to be, nor is it what, by the blessing of God, it may be. The little storms that come and go in life, the little difficulties that we meet with in our labors, too easily alarm us. So long as surrounding circumstances are favorable we move along hopefully, trusting in God; but when circumstances are changed, and we must needs bend every energy as for very life, we are ready to give up to despondency or to despair. We fear that we cannot weather the storm, that we cannot overcome the difficulty. Oh, I would that we could all, as co-workers with God, be lifted up to a more heart-strengthening, soul-comforting, peace-giving, work-promoting, God-honoring faith. After what God hath taught us, will it not be strange if in our future history we are found complaining and despairing. Let our cry to-day be, ‘Lord! we believe, help thou our unbelief.’ Let us have faith in God, especially when laboring in his cause. When trials and difficulties come, let us ‘be strong and of a good courage; let us fear not, nor be afraid of them, for the Lord our God, he it is that doth go with us. He will not fail us nor forsake us.’ Let others doubt if they will, but let us never, never, never doubt that if God be for us it matters not who are against us. Let us ‘be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.’ Let us have faith in God.”

“He’s been our God in all that’s past,  
His promises proved sure and fast;  
And we can trust him; they will last,  
Firm as the hills our journey through:  
Has he not helped us hitherto?”

*Second.* Let us *be grateful to God, and give him all the glory.* He has dealt very bountifully with us. We can sing of judgment, but blessed be God, we can sing of mercy, too. Others have had easier fields in which to labor, but it matters not, for God has been good to us. Others have had less to discourage them, but it matters not, for God has been good to us. Others have occupied high places and won for themselves names of renown, but it matters not, for God has been good to us. Others have increased more rapidly, and have had more of this world’s wealth at their disposal than we have, but it matters not, for God has been good to us.

“Great to us hath been his mercy,  
Ever faithful is his word;  
Through all ages it endureth—  
Hallelujah, praise the Lord.”

Give him all the glory. If as minister and people we have been able to do anything for the extension of Christ’s kingdom and the promotion of his honor, let us not presume to say that we did it by our own might or power. Oh no! no! a thousand times no! To God belongs all the praise, and he shall have it. By his grace it is that we are what we are, have what we have, and have done what we have done; and if in our sketch to-day one word has been used that seemed to convey any other idea, if one word has been used that sounded like human self-boasting, believe us it was not meant so to boast. These eight years have taught us to glory only in the Lord, and in him we will boast all the day long.

*Third.* Let us *gird up our loins for the future.* Something has, by the blessing of God, been accomplished by us as a congregation, but not yet enough. There is work yet to do, much work to do, enough to call forth all our energies. Let us not settle down into a sinful, shameful, do-nothing spirit, that will content itself with wishing, planning, resolving, waiting and looking on, while others around us do the working and the praying, lest God vex us in his sore displeasure. Let us see to it that the years to come do not stand out in painful contrast with the years that have already gone.



Profiting by the experiences, and avoiding the mistakes of the past, let us tighten our grasp of our God-given sword, and under Jesus Christ, our great Captain, press on to victory. "What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart."

"Awake, awake! and for the strife  
Of onward, upward Christian life,  
In earnest faith prepare:  
Where the fight rages fierce and high  
Goes forth the church's chivalry;  
And thou too must be there.  
  
Not with a sword by bloodshed stained,  
Not for a wreath that soon as gained  
Shall fade upon thy brow;  
But with the sword of God's good word,  
And for the 'well-done' of thy Lord,  
Go forth and conquer now."

What the after history of this congregation will be we cannot tell. Who will be its pastors, who will be its elders, who will be its trustees, who will be its teachers, who will occupy these pews, we do not know. We would like to lift the veil just a little, but we cannot. We must try and content ourselves with the present. Let us each and all do our part well, so that he who takes up the history where we to-day leave off may be able to say of us, "They were steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and served their generation well by the will of God."

What will the future historian of this congregation have to say about those who are kindly and generously giving us their aid, but who so far as we know have never yet given themselves to Christ? Alas! it may be with them as it was with Noah's carpenters; they helped Noah to build the ark, but they themselves perished when the storm came. Lord, save them, or they will perish!

"LET THE WHOLE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY;  
AMEN AND AMEN."

